

# **FUNDAMENTALS OF TRIAL ADVOCACY COURSE**

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Phoenix, Arizona



## **OPENING STATEMENTS**

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# The Opening Statement

Casey Mundell  
Deputy County Attorney  
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# Opening Statements

- Purposes of opening:
  - Get their attention
  - Tell the story in a cohesive way
  - Develop rapport and confidence with the jury
  - Get them thinking (processing information) like you
  - Present your theme and theory in a memorable way



# Opening Statement

## Powerful Openings:

- Advance theme and theory
- Tell a story
- Create word pictures using descriptive language
- Personalize the victim/witnesses
- Draw the sting on weaknesses
- Use visuals where appropriate

# Opening Statements

## ■ What to Avoid:

- Excessive introductions
- The witness will testify that....
- What I say is not evidence...
- The evidence will show...
- The purpose of the opening statement...
- Inform about the law

# Opening statements

## ■ Opening Outline

### ■ Theme

- Communicate your theme and get the jury's attention

### ■ Narrative (Theory)

- Preview the case with compelling storytelling
- Deal with weaknesses up front and on your terms

### ■ Charges

- Relate facts to charges

### ■ End with a call to action/Theme





Never promise more  
than you can perform.

Publilius Syrus



# Theme and Theory

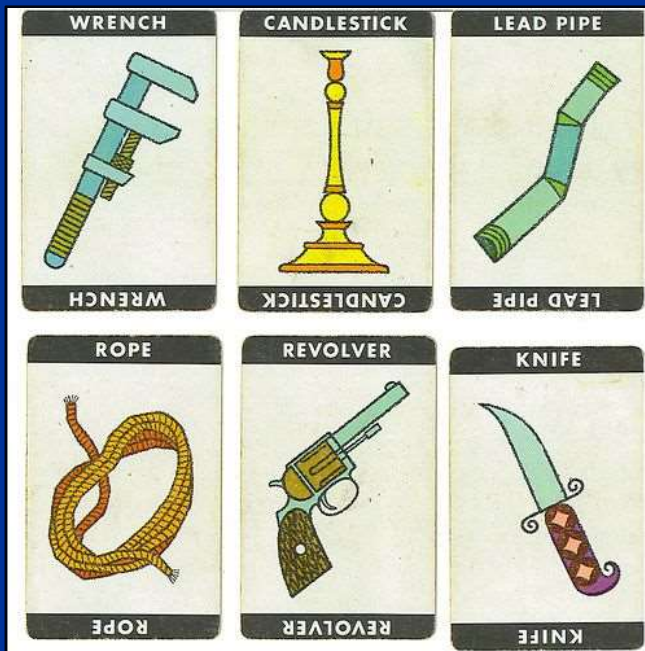
## ■ Theory

- “Why the LAW says you win”
  - Simple factual statement that incorporates all facts into a cohesive account.
  - Legal=elements (who, what, when, where)
  - Factual=why and how

## ■ Theme

- “Why the jury WANTS you to win”
  - Moral Persuasion
  - “This is a case about...”
  - What did D do that deserves punishment?
  - What *values* do we share as a community that makes this illegal?

# Theory



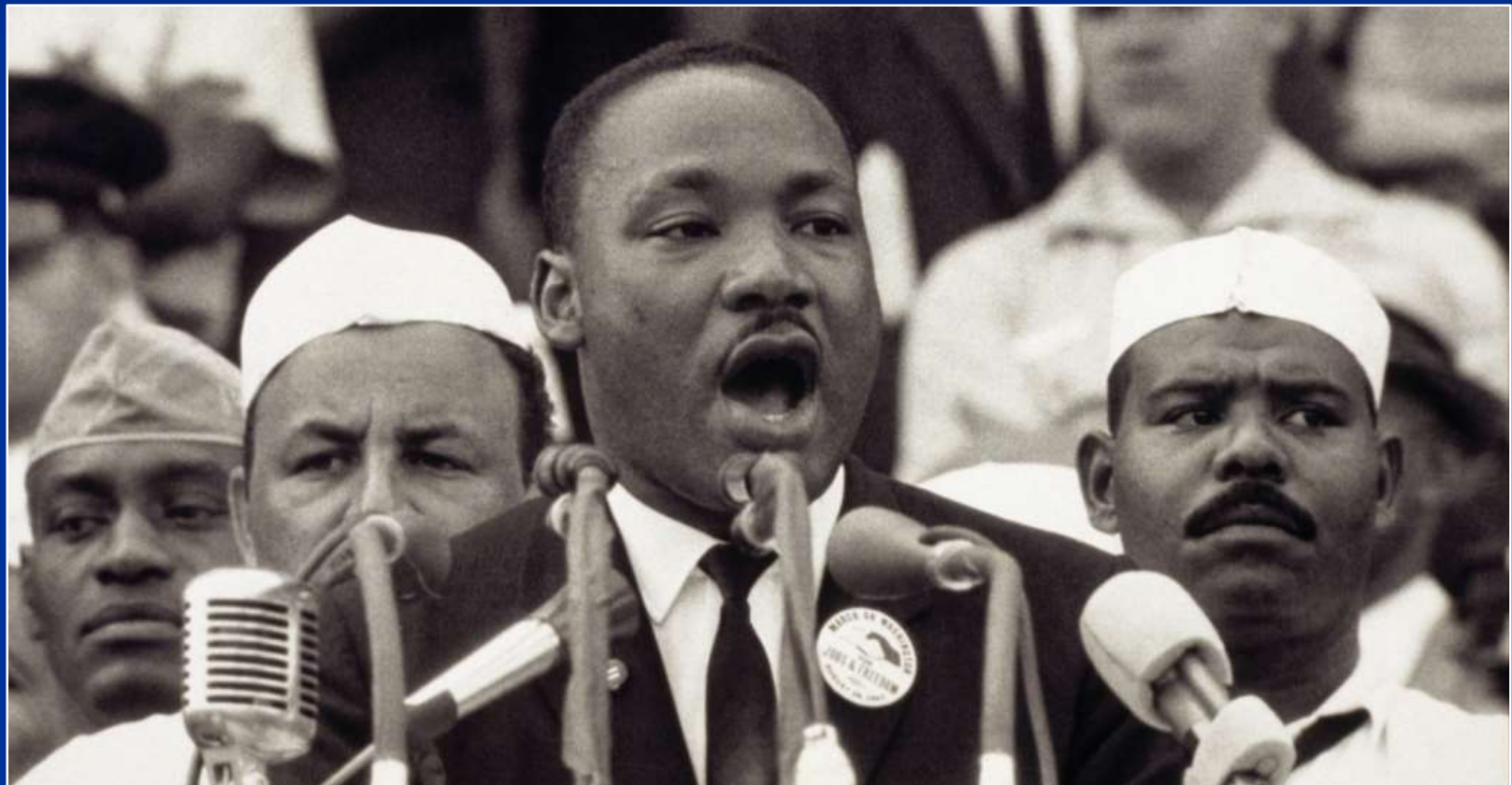
- How was the crime committed???
- Accomplice Liability or actual defendant acts?
- Actual or Constructive Possession?
- APC or Driving? Both?

**You can live without a theme;  
you will die without a theory.**

# Theme

- A phrase or idea that explains the case and what the Defendant did that deserves punishment
  - What does this case boil down to?
  - Why should the jurors care?
- Often, the theme should address your case's WEAKNESS (*i.e.*, the defense)
  - How is he going to try to beat you?

# Don't Think Themes are Effective?





# State v. Adam Chavez



trivalleycentral.com

Story Comments

Share  Print  Font S

## Visiting CG exhibit shows

**Winter visitor growing her CG cactus sanctuary** | 9A

## Closure proves elusive

While angry at Chavez for ruining her life and being the driving force that led to Matthew's death, Stacy said she killed.

# Chavez guilty

First-degree murder among 6 charge

doi:10.1017/S0022292410000533

**EVIDENCE** — A trial court may admit other character evidence if the court finds that the evidence is relevant to an issue in the case, including the defendant's intent.

It may be concluded that a strong link in which I found was indirectly based upon the existence of a power

© 2002 Blackwell Science Ltd

**Advertisement** says **Fluorocarbon** added during the construction of U.S. Space, the ground surrounding the crater will be changed with fresh-growth material.

Shirley, rather too wary to meet in person, writes: "I have enjoyed the program, mostly because, like you, we seldom get the one-on-one thing. But the results had been good."

17 pairs individually combined  
pairs combined.

The deal began with the state's application for money from the U.S. Treasury last year. It was approved by Congress last week.

## COTTON DAYS

Deputy Court is  
"Adam Chav  
Chavez was

"Adam Chavez is the driving force behind the bullet that killed Matthew Clowers," she said, adding that just because he didn't pull the trigger doesn't mean Chavez wasn't legally responsible for Clowers' death.

## Conviction doesn't help fiancée, child cope with loss

**S**he's a former *Survivor* 12 contestant who has been back and forth between the show and the *Survivor* family of reality shows. She's a former *Survivor* 12 contestant who has been back and forth between the show and the *Survivor* family of reality shows. She's a former *Survivor* 12 contestant who has been back and forth between the show and the *Survivor* family of reality shows.

## Arizona is model for how Trump might win

[illegible]

## battles

### Picacho Peak State Park embraces history

By THOMAS CLINCH  
Staff Writer

[illegible]

...the most important of these is the fact that the majority of the population is now in the urban areas. This is a major factor in the development of the country's economy and infrastructure. The government is working to improve the living conditions of the urban population and to promote the growth of the urban economy. This is a major challenge for the government, but it is also an opportunity for the country to develop and progress.

[No comments: Page 1 of 1](#)

Today's weather  
  
Sunny and warm

High	Low	Inside today's Buzz	
88	51	Therapy 4:10	Coffee machine 50
		Concave Rubber pants 50	Shoe fittings 50
		Estimate 50	Indulgence 50
		County 4 State 50	Spells 50
		Transfer 50	Willy 50

State, national forecast 50



The Japanese were  
devoted paper and  
ink specialists.

0000-0000-0000-0000





# Narrative

- The Best Story Wins:
- If you do not offer them the truth of the case through your narrative, they will create a story of their own
- The FACTS of the case are not the STORY of the case



# Jeff Bezos Banned PowerPoint in Meetings. His Replacement Is Brilliant

Narrative memos have replaced PowerPoint presentations at Amazon.  
Here are 3 reasons why.



By **Carmine Gallo** *Keynote speaker and author, [Five Stars: The Communication Secrets to Get from Good to Great](#)* [@carminegallo](#)



## 1. Our brains are hardwired for narrative.

Narrative storytelling might not have been as critical for our survival as a species as food, but it comes close.

Anthropologists say when humans gained control of fire, it marked a major milestone in human development. Our ancestors were able to cook food, which was a big plus. But it also had a second benefit. People sat around campfires swapping stories. Stories served as instruction, warning, and inspiration.

Recently, I've talked to prominent neuroscientists whose experiments confirm what we've known for centuries: The human brain is wired for story. We process our world in narrative, we talk in narrative and--most important for leadership--people recall and retain information more effectively when it's presented in the form of a story, not bullet points.

known for centuries: The human brain is wired for story. We process our world in narrative, we talk in narrative and--most important for leadership--people recall and retain information more effectively when it's presented in the form of a story, not bullet points.



## 2. Stories are persuasive.

Aristotle is the father of persuasion. More than 2,000 years ago he revealed the three elements that all persuasive arguments must have to be effective. He called these elements "appeals." They are: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos is character and credibility. Logos is logic--an argument must appeal to reason. But ethos and logos are irrelevant in the absence of pathos--emotion.

Emotion is not a bad thing. The greatest movements in history were triggered by speakers who were gifted at making rational *and* emotional appeals: Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr.; and John F. Kennedy, who blended science and emotion to inspire America's moon program.

Neuroscientists have found emotion is the fastest path to the brain. In other words, if you want your ideas to spread, story is the single best vehicle we have to transfer that idea to another person.

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# Biggest Enemy of a Good Narrative???

## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SECURITY

### CONTINUATION / SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

**DR NUMBER:**

**2015-XY0189**

On July 25, 2015, at approximately 1900 hours, I responded to 1831 S Salt River Rd., in Phoenix, AZ, in response to a 911 hang up call for service. Upon arrival I was contacted by a Hispanic female who was later identified as Sara Lopez, DOB: 07/07/1977. Sara exited the front door crying, saying: "I need someone to talk to my boyfriend. I don't know why he would do that."

Sara advised me she was making dinner when her live-in boyfriend, later identified as Daniel Jackson, DOB: 06/16/1977, became upset. Sara stated Daniel was angry they were having Spam for dinner. Sara told me Daniel threw two cans of Spam at her while she was cooking, hitting her right forearm and the top of her left calf near the left side of her knee. Sara stated that Daniel had been drinking all day. I observed Sara had a US quarter size bump/abrasion in the middle of her right forearm and redness to her top left calf. Sara advised Daniel had thrown things before but never hit her. Sara stated Daniel continued to yell at her, grabbed his car keys, and left the area. Sara stated Daniel left in a 1989 Ford F150. I advised Dispatch of the provided vehicle description and requested units contact the driver.

While I was speaking with Sara, I observed a white Ford F150 truck bearing Arizona registration BFF331 driving up the road and weaving slightly from side to side. The truck pulled into the

# Narrative - Where to Begin

- Determine the Order
  - Chronological
    - Crime
    - Discovery
  - Start at end and explain how it got to that point
  - Start at a significant point in the story
- Determine the Point of View
  - Storytelling is more compelling when you pick a narrative perspective of an involved party or parties rather than an omnipotent POV



# Goal of Clarity and Simplicity:

## ■ Possible Points of View

1. The Victim
2. The Defendant
3. An important witness

The police officer  who wrote the DR

Choosing an interesting narrative perspective will make your story much more engaging, compelling, and easy to follow

# Descriptive Language



- Contrast :
- “The Defendant pulled out a gun and pointed it at the victim” with...
- “The Defendant stabbed the victim 14 times causing horrible injuries” with...

# Descriptive Language

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS			
Large	Fast	Said	Hard
big colossal enormous gigantic huge massive substantial tremendous	accelerated active agile brisk nimble quick speedy swift	asked called exclaimed remarked replied responded stated told	challenging complicated demanding grueling puzzling rigid tough tricky
Happy	Kind	Small	Walk
blissful cheerful delighted elated glad jolly jovial joyful	benevolent considerate courteous helpful loving patient sweet thoughtful	diminutive little miniature minute petite teeny tiny wee	hike march pace saunter shuffle stroll strut wander
Funny	Easy	Run	Sad
amusing comical entertaining gleeful hilarious humorous whimsical witty	apparent carefree effortless manageable obvious simple snap uncomplicated	dart dash jog race rush scamper scurry sprint	dejected depressed disheartened forlorn gloomy glum joyless unhappy

# Anticipate Defenses

Subtly address these

Do not make  
promises about the  
Defense's case

Think about how the  
Defendant plans to  
beat you



# “Bad” Facts

- Address problems head-on
  - Reluctant victim
  - Victim/Witness with criminal history
  - Mishandled investigation or lack of evidence

# Dealing with Weakness

- Attribute “bad facts” to the Defendant
  - Who chooses who the witnesses and victims are in a criminal case?
  - No fingerprints? No videotape? No DNA? – that’s exactly the way the Defendant wanted it
  - Then incorporate into theme/theory: Defendant preys upon the weak; never the powerful, or those with a voice, only the defenseless, the kind he thinks no one cares about

# Dealing with Weakness

- Show to the jury you gave them the truth, and the whole truth
  - The weakness is not the big deal the defense will make it out to be
  - The weakness is actually a strength
  - Ultimately, the Defendant is still guilty: put the weakness in context



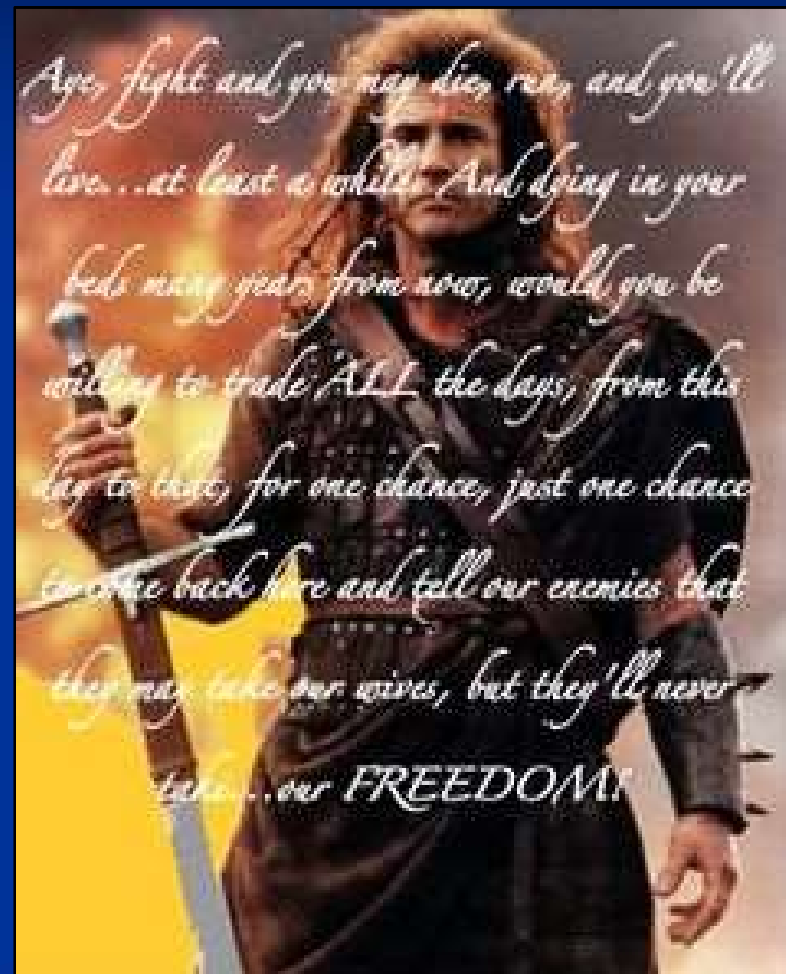


# State the Charges

- At the conclusion of your narrative, relate the facts to your charges in this case
- “For these reasons, Defendant is charged with...”

# Finish Strong

- Theme
- Call to Action



# Opening Statements

- A word about delivery
  - Use of notes
  - Word choice
  - Movement for impact vs. pacing
  - Use of podium
  - Use of exhibits



# First Impressions Last



# Opening Example

Questions???